SEPTEMBER 1958

The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

GENEVA TO GINDIRI
Lester DeKoster

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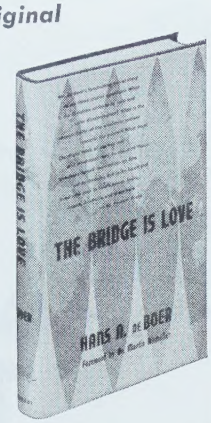

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A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINION

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Geneva to Gindiri

by Lester DeKoster

Different men, Patrick Henry remarked, see the same subject in different lights. They are led, therefore, to differing conclusions. This is not surprising. For men are the children of Adam.

We are tempted, as children of Adam, moreover, by the fact of our intellectual differences to employ them as wedges to drive ourselves asunder, the one from the other. Differences become walls. "Good fences," we say, "make good neighbors." So, apparently, did some in the infant church of Corinth. For it is much of the thrust of Paul's first letter to this church to inveigh against making differences into walls. This, he says, is viewing differences carnally. Viewed spiritually, however, differences must become, Paul teaches, the occasions to (yea, the very cause of) unity. And to this end he employs the celebrated figure of a body, in which the separate parts *serve* each other (and the whole) precisely in virtue of their differences.

In this same Pauline spirit, Calvin taught that even doctrinal differences among believers ought to promote, not dissension, but unity: "God never designed in such a way to exercise liberality towards his servants, as that each should be endowed with a full and perfect understanding on every point; and doubtless, in this respect, he intended in the first place, to keep us humble, and next of all to keep up and maintain the desire and exercise of brotherly love and communion" (Pref. to *Comm. on Romans*).

This may be, at first glance, astonishing teaching; not Calvin's assertion that our ignorance should make us humble: who has not beheld the catalog of a university library without the sinking realization of how tiny a part of recorded knowledge he will ever know? But Calvin's insistence that such ignorance, such difference, such variety as there may be among believers should of itself lead to brotherly love and communion: this is startling. For our experience is too often otherwise. We know how we seem to prefer to minimize our agreements and to exult our disagreements. And we know these disagreements lead, as oft as not, to separation and disunion. And we, like the Corinthians, yield to the temptation to boast that it is so. This we did not learn from Paul, nor from Calvin. They both insisted that intellectual differences *among believers* should promote unity.

Happy it is when this unity is achieved by the resolution of the difference. And this may occur. But Paul and Calvin mean more than that, I think. They mean that unity may be achieved though the difference remains. The hand need not become an eye to find a place in the body. Neither victory on the one hand, nor compromise on the other are essential requisites to communion of the saints. Unity may not only be found in despite of differences, but it may also be found because of them. This is mysterious and, perhaps, as I say, astonishing.

Without attempting a longer and more difficult investigation than my space and talents allow, may I suggest that the basis for such Christian unity-in-difference may lie in the fact that here two forms or levels of reality are under discussion. The ground of all real unity is the Holy Spirit, whose ministrations obviously are not confined by denominational or doctrinal boundaries; while, on the other hand, the ground of doctrinal difference is theological discrimination, pursued by each child of God within the limits of his abilities and insights. Thus the underlying *unity* may exhibit real theological *differences*, and yet both unity and difference are genuine. Because, therefore, unity and difference lie (in this context), at, so to say, different levels, we may believe that unity in the Spirit need not, and does not, thrive at the expense of theological integrity, nor is it nourished by theological compromise.

It is because this integrity of distinction can co-exist within the unity of the Spirit that Calvin, writing to Bucer, can in the same letter decry Bucer's doctrinal error and yet embrace him as a brother: Calvin writes, in 1538, as follows: " . . . in your commentaries on the psalms, a work . . . of superlative merit . . . though to confess to you frankly, it always appeared to me a thing utterly intolerable that in the work in question you overturned from its foundations the doctrine of justification by faith . . . ." And, in the same letter: "The Lord is my witness that it is not with the mind alone, but with my very bowels, that I dissent as often as I see that I do not agree with pious men, and especially with you whose most excellent gifts besides your piety I cannot but cherish and look up to . . . . May the Lord preserve you and increase in you his gifts, most worthy and dearest brother" (*Letters*, IV, 387; Bonnet edition used throughout).

A more moving testimony to Calvin's conviction that unity transcends grave difference of opinion might be difficult to find, though Calvin frequently gives practical expression to the same belief.

If unity were possible only at the cost of theological distinctions ignored or compromised it would be, in St. Paul's terms, carnal, fleshly, worldly, materialistic. Genuine spiritual unity among children of God can and does occur, not only in despite of doctrinal differences, but on a more challenging level also because of them. This is a mystery which is reminiscent of another mystery, namely, the doctrine of scriptural inspiration. For do we not confess that, by the Spirit, the writers of God's revelation both remained themselves, with all their unique differences, and yet committed to (incarnated in) *their* words nothing but the thoughts of God? May we not, in like manner, retaining our doctrinal distinctions, strive to become ever more at one with each other in that same Spirit? If we strive, that is, in *humility?*

For, Calvin taught, humility is, on man's side, the gateway to unity. So he says in the preface to Romans quoted above, and so he says in commenting on I Corinthians 14:31: "For no one will ever be a good teacher, who does not show himself to be teachable, as no one will ever be found who has, in himself alone, such an overflowing in respect of perfection of doctrine, as not to derive any benefit from listening to others. Let all, therefore, undertake the office of teaching on this principle, that they do not refuse or grudge to be scholars to each other in their turn, whenever there shall be afforded to others the means of edifying the Church."

Christian distinctiveness in this area lies, then, neither in the accentuation of, nor in the denial of, differences among brethren; but Christian distinctiveness lies in the ability given these brethren to employ such differences as means to unity of spirit. So Calvin further: " . . . gifts are not distributed thus variously among believers, in order that they may be used apart, but that in the division there is a unity, inasmuch as one Spirit is the source of all these gifts, one God is the Lord of all administrations, and the author of all exercises of power" (I Cor. 12:4). And to this he appends a warning: "Let us have a regard to the common advantage, in order that we may not destroy the Church by malignity, or envy, or pride, or any disagreement; but may, on the contrary, every one of us, strive to the utmost of his power to preserve it" (I Cor. 12:27).

And as humility is the gateway to unity, so love is "the bond" of unity, as Calvin says: "It is not then to be wondered, if all our deeds are estimated by this test — their appearing to proceed from love. It is also not to be wondered, if gifts, otherwise excellent, come to have their true value only when they are made subservient to *love.*" This is his comment, of course, on I Corinthians 13 and Paul's mighty affirmation there that neither knowledge, nor charities, nor understanding, nor eloquence are anything at all until they be made to serve in the retinue of love. In this service, differences of knowledge and understanding become occasion neither for glorying, nor for strife, but for blessed communion.

In Nigeria

Seen in this light, it is not wonderful that there should be differences among us regarding our participation in the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (hereafter TCNN). We are all of us but men; and difference, like unity in difference, reflects life not only, but is an open measure of our finitude and shortcoming. What Calvin clearly teaches, however, from the beginning of his literary life to its close, is that the welfare of the church hangs, as it were, not upon whether or not there be differences, but upon what use the disputants make of their disputing. Do they learn humility and docility, deeper insight and fuller love? Then will the church prosper.

I advance the opinions which follow, desirous only of adhering to Calvin's teaching, not only in application of it to the problem raised by the TCNN, but also in making it relevant to those who discuss the matter, beginning with myself. On what better issue than this might we all seek to create, as God surely wills, unity out of disharmony; for this issue itself deals explicitly with the unity of His church. And to this end, since it is and has been for some time past my pleasant task to employ my free time in the reading of Calvin, towards a dissertation, I shall try to see Gindiri through the lenses of Geneva. I hope, reader, whatever your present opinion, you will care to look with me; and that whatever we see together may seem to you so fair a glimpse of the spirit of Calvin in Christ that whatever our differences remain, we may yet be drawn the closer together.

Since this may be the first of several articles on the subject, it will begin by surveying the discussion now under way. Rarely does real intellectual progress arise out of negation. The article which defines itself solely by what it opposes is, like the mentality which does so, usually fruitless not only, but also enervating. And I would prefer to stress, therefore, those grounds which seem to me to bear positive witness toward our participation in the TCNN. And we will come to these. But they will,

I judge, be seen more clearly if, as I say, the ground already traversed by others is first surveyed. And so I choose to begin, as in rebuttal, by discussing first of all those arguments commonly advanced against our participation in the school. I shall start with those called "most weighty" by their adherents. From the strength of these may be assessed the worth of others.

A Brief Digression

The subject, however, should not be opened at all without taking note, by slight but useful digression, of one insistently affirmative item of context, namely this: in the much writing and speaking which have enveloped this subject one fact seems commonly agreed: we are in Nigeria, in the Sudan United Mission, and have loaned to it a representative *by invitation.* From whom has proceeded and does proceed, such invitation? Not from pagans, nor from liberals, but from Christian brethren. This answer is unmistakable, and to deny it would be to deny the validity of all the work we have ourselves done over many years.

Whatever may be the dispute over our staffing and heading the TCNN, it is certain, then, that the initial call to the Sudan United Mission, the initial call to loan a teacher, and the present invitation to take leadership in the school came to us as Macedonian cries across the sea. We know that such invitations, like all else in our experience, come in the providence of God. We, like Peter, may demur; and it is well that we "test the spirit" of those who call us. But if we cannot deny at last the term "brethren" to those who seek our aid and leadership, must we not reckon with Calvin's warning to Du Tillet: " . . . for I perceive how many begin to flatter themselves under the title of The Church, strongly condemning whatsoever is not like their own, for which they will have to render account" (*Letters*, I, 63).

And we, too, will have an account to render for our response to this summons from abroad. We are no longer free of it either by acceptance or by rejection. Either implies *responsibility* for what happens *in the school* thereafter. If we have no good reason for denying that this invitation comes, like those before it, out of the will of the Spirit, how can we set up our own reservations and qualifications before we heed it?

It is in this context that we should discuss the issues. God's will, we know, is going to be done in Nigeria. All of us wish to further it, as He calls us. Our problem is: what means shall we use? A path has been opened to us, and we have been offered leadership in it: the TCNN.

Why, then, do some turn away?

The First Objection

The "two most weighty objections" to our participation in the TCNN are not, on their face, immediately persuasive. For they were, of course, laboriously explained both before and at Synod of 1958, and Synod after due consideration rejected them. That they are, nevertheless, thought weighty by their proponents entitles them to serious consideration. Let us turn to the first.

This objection is presented in the form of argument termed dilemma; that is, those who favor our participation in the school are confronted with two consequences, both undesirable, one or the other of which is presumed inevitably to occur. The choice we have, if we join the TCNN, is between compromise or conflict, so runs the argument. Either our representative (and presumably each other denomination's representative) on the faculty of the TCNN will tone down those doctrinal tenets which distinguish him from his colleagues; or, if he does not do so, estrangement and bitterness among the professors will inevitably follow. This is the contention. It may be worded variously, but the forms of it come at last to this disjunction: accept compromise or choose conflict, if we go into the TCNN.

Argument from dilemma is not new. Its strength has long been understood to lie in the ability of the arguer to demonstrate successfully that the alternatives he proposes do actually exhaust all of the possibilities. Well, here are only two options proposed: compromise or conflict. Is it true, then, that when Christians differ from each other, in doctrinal matters each sincerely maintains, that compromise or conflict are the only consequences available to them?

Obviously not! Compromise or conflict, in the sense of growing bitterness, are by no means the only possibilities when sincere interpretations meet head-on. Of what "little faith" indeed we would be if we were to reject the call from Nigeria on this sandy ground.

First of all, consider what Calvin teaches. He was passionately concerned with purity of doctrine, no compromiser was he; and, too, he was passionately concerned to forward unity among true believers, no patron of bitterness was he. How did he draw these two violent steeds together under one yoke: the passion for truth and the passion for unity? This question has been answered. He *unites differences* in the manner I have discussed above; by finding *unity in difference,* so long as faith is present.

And Calvin was as good as his word. We have noted how he embraced Bucer even as he decried the error of his commentary. The world knows

how Calvin sought harmony and unity with Luther and his followers despite their wide difference on the Lord's Supper; nor did the tirades which Luther unleashed in the direction of Geneva dissuade Calvin from spurring Melanchthon on to greater efforts at unity. And of Melanchthon himself, Calvin writes in 1552 that "he who would place Melanchthon and myself in opposition, greatly wrongs both the one and the other, as well as the whole Church of God" (*Letters,* III, 368). Yet these men differed not only on the Supper, but Melanchthon rejected Calvin's doctrines on free will and predestination. Moreover, it was Calvin who not only approved the French translation of the dogmatics (*Loci*) in which Melchanthon did differ from himself, but prefaced it with a commendation of the author.

Or, in short, from another point of view, Calvin's practice hewed to the line of a letter written to Caroli in 1540: "You are very anxious to show that you did not excite disturbance in the Church without good reason; as if indeed any honest cause could ever be advanced for disturbing the peace of the Church" (*Letters,* III, 198).

Not only, however, did Calvin say by precept and by example that neither compromise nor bitterness need necessarily flow from difference, but he also said the same in just so many words.

It happens that a dilemma in precisely the same form as now used against our participation in the TCNN was brought against Calvin by Bullinger, the reformer of Zurich. The nub of the dispute between them was Calvin's determination to hold discussions with the Catholics for a possible reunion of the church. This visible oneness of Christ's body was a goal Calvin so devoutly desired that he writes of a conference to Peter Martyr in these terms: ". . . if it is not yet God's pleasure to open a door, it is our duty to creep through the windows, or press through the smallest holes that give us entry, rather than allow an opportunity of bringing about a happy arrangement to escape us" (in 1551; *Letters,* IV, 209) What a contrast such persistence makes with our reluctance to join hands even with those who accept the gospel with us.

But Bullinger wanted no conference with representation of the Pope. And to dissuade Calvin, he poses our old friend, the dilemma: compromise or conflict! Calvin discusses it in a letter to John Laski, in 1556: "Bullinger, however, in a prolix letter which he lately wrote to me, labored to prove that the affair would be in every respect disastrous. For here is the dilemma he lays down: if we deviate ever so little from the pure and simple profession of our doctrine to curry favor with the other party, nothing would be more disgracefu for us, and far more troubles would immediatel spring up out of that concession; but if we defen freely and constantly the doctrine we profess, w shall receive this very sorry recompense for ou pains, to be styled stubborn and refractory zealots And one or the other of these alternatives he take for granted will be the necessary consequence."

And so, indeed, Calvin speaks from 1556 to 1958 one or the other of these alternatives — compro mise or conflict — you take for granted. Needless t say, Calvin did not. His letter goes on: "I on the contrary, though I admit that nothing is more per nicious than an obscure and ambiguous or equivoca conciliation, yet do not despair but that a sincere and candid moderation may be hit upon, which wil be dear to all honest men, and will destroy the influence of those hot-headed individuals, who with their tumultuous clamors disturb the peace of the world. Though then the Zurichers are averse t a conference, if an opportunity should present itself, I will endeavor to draw them over to us. And *certes,* I do not think they are so untamable as t refuse" (*Letters,* III, 265).

How "untamable," then, are we? Shall we take the way of Geneva to Gindiri, or the way of Zurich? I rejoice that we who bear Calvin's name have so far chosen the way of Geneva, and sent back our representative in the spirit of our progenitor: not to compromise, nor to bitterness, but rather that being "sincere and candid" on the one hand, he may with "moderation" on the other pursue a unity born out of difference and lying deeper than difference, grounded on the faith we share with those others with whom we have been laboring in Nigeria.

Nor, be it again stressed, did Calvin suppose that such unity would be achieved at the expense of distinctiveness. To M. Unhard, in Poland, he writes in 1555: "Remains now another subject of complaint, that I do not everywhere subscribe to the interpretations of Luther. But if it shall no longer be permitted to each interpreter on the different passages of Scripture to bring forward his opinion, into what a depth of servility have we fallen? Nay, if I was never to dissent from Luther, to undertake the task of interpretation was absurd and ridiculous" (*Letters,* III, 154). And again, to one Libertet, in 1534: "Further, word has been brought me by some one, I know not whom, at your request, that you did not entirely approve of some things in my treatise on the Immortality of Souls. So far from being offended because of your opinion, I am delighted with this straight-forward plainness. Nor does my perversity reach to such a degree as to allow

in myself a freedom of opinion I would wish to take away from others" (*Letters*, I, 43).

Nay, the figure of Calvin which looms across the years is not one of fawning and mewing servility, ready to purchase harmony at the expense of his convictions. It is far rather the figure of a man so secure in his faith, so confident of the presence of God in his life, that he has achieved a power, and a serenity, and a repose (the fruits of solid and living faith) which flee not away from like power and repose in others. He could extend the hand of fellowship never doubting that it should remain his hand even as he gripped that of another. He could pray and strive for unity with all who bore the marks of the church (and the reader of both his letters and the *Institutes* will see how far he was willing to go in this regard) not at the surrender of his convictions, but just exactly because he had his convictions!

And this, I say respectfully, we too must learn: to move with composure among friend and foe, strong in our faith and secure in our God. We will then, and perhaps then only, come to judge our contacts in the world, not by what they might do to us, but by what we can do through them. So did John Calvin, and on this aspect of his character rests both his passion for unity with all his brethren, and his little fear that such harmony would cost him the right to sound his note in love.

Old or New Adam

From a slightly different point of view, is it not true that this dilemma we have been considering — compromise or conflict — lacks true persuasive power because it is, after all, based upon the Old Adam? And, indeed, active enough he is in us all. No one need pause to count or to recount the instances in which projects of all kinds, entered upon by Christians with high hope, have foundered upon the faults enumerated by Calvin above: malignity, envy, pride, disagreement. Nor were the attempts Calvin made to secure unity in difference always successful. But the approach makes all the difference. Calvin did not spend himself for unity with the Old Adam in view, nor with it as his governing premise. He lived and died in the resolute faith that, as God wills, the New Adam can transform difference into harmony; for harmony is, after all, but the concord of differences — a simile Calvin himself uses in commenting on Ephesians 4:11.

So Calvin to Farel in 1539: "This one thing I strove for, that they might not schismatically divide any church whatsoever . . . . no other union of the brethren was recommended by me than what is pointed out to us by the example of Christ, who, notwithstanding their deplorable impiety, did not scruple to unite with Jews in participating in the mysteries of God" (*Letters*, I, 117). And to Zebedee in the same year: "And this alone I ask of you, that you constantly retain that faith in which you have hitherto stood, but in such a manner as that you may not appear of your own free will to seek for a rupture with those to whom you cannot refuse the right of being esteemed both by you and all pious men as among the leading servants of Christ. Good God, to what point we have come. We ought to consider a separation from the ministers of Christ, with the same disposition as if our own bowels were torn out" (*Letters*, IV, 401).

Geneva, Then, to Gindiri

What, now, is the answer of Geneva to the problem of Gindiri, under the rubric of: compromise or conflict?

Let us follow the steps again: let differences be a spur, not to division but to unity; not only to the unity of conference and confrontation, but also to the sustained community of striving together; not at the surrender of tenets and sincerity, but because of them; not in our own strength, but in the serenity of faith.

Have we, then, but the sorry choice between compromise or conflict in Nigeria?

We can give the answer in Calvin's own words: "On the contrary . . ."!

A Second Argument

Supposing, however, we are told, that we do continue our association with the school, what of the students who come there? Can they escape confusion of mind and uncertainty of conviction as they listen to differing points of view regarding doctrinal matters, each expressed with candor?

This will be recognized as the second "weighty objection" against participation in the TCNN. It follows upon the first, as a kind of third alternative: if not compromise, and if not bitterness, then confusion.

Briefly, it is not likely that Calvin would have been any more sympathetic to this alternative than he was to the first two, for reasons which follow, I think, from all that has been quoted above.

But lest so long a piece grow tedious, let a fuller discussion of this objection, and of the strange view of education it presupposes especially in the light of the practices of the Academy of Geneva, be postponed to another time.

Shall we pause now, and reflect if we ourselves will pray that difference will really lead to deeper unity, not only in Nigeria but also at home?

The Roots of the Calvinistic Day School Movement (I)

by Donald Oppewal

THIS SERIES OF ARTICLES is designed to be an analysis of the main theoretical foundations of what in Reformed circles is called simply "The Christian School Movement." In these articles the writer will by a survey of the literature connected with the movement attempt to show from whence it derives its impetus and how it has come to be what it is. The articles will try to show the effect upon the school of certain intellectual disciplines and certain religious and cultural movements.

If the Calvinistic school movement is to function best on the American scene, it must keep before itself a sense of its own past. If it is to retain its own identity and if it is not to be swallowed up, it must realize that its educational practice is rooted in quite different disciplines and intellectual traditions than most of the existing school systems in America. If a proper understanding of the past is necessary for the determination of future directions, then a systematic backward look can be most valuable for making today's decisions. This is not to assume that one makes decisions today based only on the past, or that past decisions were always wise; it means only that decisions made today without a look at the past will tend to be arbitrary (lacking in principle), or aimless (lacking in direction), or, still worse, imitative (lacking in originality). In the opinion of this writer all three of these dangers face the school movement at present, and this sketch of the movement's intellectual history is offered as a corrective of these dangerous tendencies.

Since historical judgments are never made in isolation from one's own subjective preferences, the reader should be reminded that this is one way of looking at the past. I have tried to keep my judgments rooted in fact or in clear-cut trends evidenced in the literature, but the reader should be reminded of the thin line that separates editorializing from reporting facts. To the extent that some significant literature has escaped my attention, and to the extent that actual practice and the literature do not coincide, to that extent the judgments may be inadequate, or unbalanced and not truly representative of the system of schools which it has produced. Judgments as to the most promising directions for future development are offered to the Reformed community as a stimulus to further thinking about future directions.

Just a word about documentation may be in order. This material was originally prepared as an academic exercise in a thesis seminar at the University of Illinois. For the pages of this journal the whole academic apparatus of footnote and bibliography has been reduced to a bare minimum. All judgments can be supported by evidence from the literature consisting of some half-dozen books, numerous articles from such periodicals as *The Banner* and *The Christian Home and School,* from the *Christian School Annual* (published by the National Union of Christian Schools since about 1920), and the printed proceedings of the yearly Principals Conference (since about 1948). For data on the early days of the movement (before 1900), I have relied extensively on the evidence gathered by Rev. George Stob for his doctoral dissertation at Princeton Theological Seminary. Without the results of the painstaking research done by Dr. Stob, this writer could not have made sense out of trends since 1900. My debt to him is gratefully acknowledged. The staff of the National Union of Christian Schools was also very helpful in providing source materials.

The Present Setting

Although the public school movement is by far the most significant educational movement in America, it alone does not tell the whole story of American education. And although the development of American democracy has gone hand in hand with the development of the public school system, it would be unwarranted to assume that the democratic way of life does not allow for anything but the public school system as its institutional expression.

Minority groups of one kind or another have always been precious to the democratic spirit. Whereas all authoritarian societies suppress and condemn them, it is of the essence of democracy not only to tolerate them but to encourage their continued existence. This is because in a democratic society, the presence of alternatives, and a free choice between them by the people, is necessary in order to carry on free exchange of opinion and interchange of influence. This free exchange and

interchange always requires differences in order to exist; it requires, in brief, a multi-group social arrangement. Democracy has in this sense always been pluralistic, and unlike such monolithic societies as Franco's Spain or Hitler's Germany, it has regarded the minority voice as not only something to be tolerated, but as something to be protected.[1] It has recognized as necessary to the continued existence of democracy the presence of a minority group, whose function and role is to keep alive discussion and the possibility of progress by offering alternatives to the majority opinion and by acting as the vocal critic of the majority opinion.

Just as in politics this democratic spirit has fostered the multi-party system, and as in religion it has prevented the establishment of any single religion, so in education it has fostered a multi-group expression in different and differing school systems. While the public school system has for some time given institutional expression to majority opinion in the matter of education, there have always been alternative school systems on the American scene. Some were in existence before the founding of the public system, and some have arisen as protest institutions since then, but they at present exist alongside each other and in competition with each other. Just as a single party system in politics would be inconsistent with democratic procedure, a single system of schools in any society would be evidence of an authoritarian rather than a democratic society. Monolithic societies, where there is one and only one state-approved religion, or political party, or educational system, with a subsequent condemnation of all others as divisive, stand as the very antithesis of democracy. To the extent that the minority voice, and its institutional expression, exists only by sufferance and not by right, to that extent the democratic way of life stands in jeopardy.

It is tempting at this point to develop the implications of this concept of democracy, and to examine the extent to which minority group school systems in America do in fact enjoy only quasi-legal status, and are only tolerated and not respected for their contribution. Involved, of course, is the whole problem of their status as determined by their access to public funds. It is quite clear at any rate that while minority group school systems have always existed, their role and status in democratic society has not always been acknowledged as necessary and good by all. President Conant of Harvard and his charge a decade ago that private schools are divisive and undemocratic is only one of the more publicized expressions of this spirit. Many more recent examples could be cited.[2] However, while any recalcitrant minority is by some regarded as an obstacle to the enhancement of democracy, it can just as easily and legitimately be regarded as a prerequisite to further progress. In education such minorities, with their alternative solutions to the various problems of educational theory, may well hold the key to future improvement. At very least, in their role of critic, they prevent the majority from becoming complacent.

Whatever the grounds in democratic theory, minority groups do continue to have their own systems. Although the vast majority of children of elementary and high school age attend some public school, over 13 percent do not. If higher institutions were included in the figures, the percentage would be much higher, as almost half of those attending higher institutions go to non-public colleges and universities. This figure for the elementary and secondary level has not always remained constant, and there is evidence that the trend is again upward within the past decade, signifying that people are turning more and more to alternative means for the education of their children. Already in 1951 the opponents of non-public schools showed concern over a 24 percent increase in enrollment in private schools over a ten-year period because this was a rate nearly twice that of the public schools. Of these non-public systems the parochial schools of the Roman Catholic Church are most significant, enrolling over four million of the five and one-half million students not enrolled in public schools. About half of all children of Roman Catholic parents are in parochial schools. Next in significance are the Lutheran parochial schools. Then there are the private academies and boarding schools, some of them religious and some maintained for socio-economic and cultural reasons.

Besides these types of non-public school systems, there is still another type which is neither parochial, nor public, nor private in the usual sense of the word. Although it is religious in orientation and aim, it is not maintained and operated by any religious denomination. It is a system of parentally controlled schools now enrolling over forty thousand pupils in elementary and secondary schools in the United States and Canada (*Christian School Annual*, 1957-58). It has been in the making for approximately fifty years, and has in the past two decades gained enough momentum to be considered as a significant, although still minor, movement in American education. Its steady progress is clear from statistics published by the National Union of Christian Schools, the national service agency for this system. These statistics show an increase in enrollment of 5 percent from 1955 to 1956. Later

1. See on this point particularly T. V. Smith & Edward Lindeman, *The Democratic Way of Life*, New York: Mentor Books, 1955, p. 112.

2. Theodore Brameld, of the extreme wing of the social reconstructionists in education, is perhaps the most vocal present-day spokesman for this view.

figures, those for the years of 1956-57 and 1957-58 show a one-year increase of 8.7 percent.

Its present philosophy of education, as expressed in this system, offers alternative answers to a number of important problems in educational theory. Just a few of the major issues represented in this system of schools are: (1) the aims and purposes of education, (2) the locus of educational control, and (3) the relationship between religion and education. The purpose of this paper is not so much to argue for the rightness of these answers as to trace their roots and examine their theoretical bases, so that both those within the system and those without may better understand the origins of this unique system. As has already been suggested this understanding is important, because failure on the part of those within the system to understand wherein its theoretical bases differ from those of public education can lead to an unwitting absorption into its own practices and aims of elements that are inconsistent with its own theoretical bases. On the other hand, failure to recognize wherein the aims and purposes of the system do or can coincide with those of public education can easily lead to fostering anti-cultural and separatistic values simply to maintain distinctiveness.

We will now examine each of the major roots of this system as well as the general soil in which they grew and which still sustains them. Some of these roots go deeper into the past than others, and, as we shall see, some of them even reach to other countries and cultures. These roots reach not only into other countries and cultures, but also into specific intellectual disciplines. Each of these will be examined in turn for its effect in shaping the present school movement.

The School System and Calvinism: Its Religio-Philosophical Soil

While the roots of the Calvinistic day school movement reach into specific cultures and disciplines, their common soil is that of the religio-philosophical system called Calvinism. Founded by John Calvin in the sixteenth century and given earliest cultural expression in Geneva, Switzerland, it has since then played a crucial role in the spread of the Reformation to France, The Netherlands, England, and America. In each of these countries it has affected not only specifically religious life and practices, but social and political life as well. Although it has assumed different shapes and different roles in each of these countries, in none of them has it operated simply as a set of specifically doctrinal or liturgical beliefs; it has always found cultural expression and produced an effect upon economics, politics, and education, although not to the same degree in all countries. R. H. Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* and Ralph Barton Perry's *Puritanism and Democracy* are just a few of the standard works which have dealt with Calvinism in its social and economic forms. In The Netherlands the rise to power of the Anti-Revolutionary Party under Abraham Kuyper is another instance of this tendency of Calvinism to seek expression in various cultural spheres.

It is not surprising therefore to find that in some countries Calvinism has also found institutional expression in the field of education. That the term Calvinism should imply an educational theory more than Methodism for example, seems strange except to those who know Calvinism as more than just another Protestant sect. The field of education has also given recognition to Calvinism as a world and life view with implications for education. As one of the general works on education has it:

> One of the fairest and most permanent influences of Calvinists in Geneva, France, Holland, Scotland, England, and America was their contribution to education (*Monroe's Cyclopedia of Education*, Vol. I, p. 491).

There is here in this same volume also the recognition that the interest of Calvinists in education has been more than simply that of church extension, or of specifically religious and doctrinal instruction. Whereas it is characteristic of Protestant sects to view day school education as a means of evangelism or of giving religious instruction in the beliefs of that sect, Calvinism has conceived of education much more broadly. The following quotation is an indication that the writer was aware of this difference between Calvinism and much of Protestantism.

> The remarkable development of colleges and free schools among Calvinists was not entirely due to any single theological tenet. . . . Calvin and all these Calvinists had a common program of broad scope — not merely doctrinal, but also political, economic, social — and similar ideals and institutions. Their common program and their social insight demanded education for all as instruments of Providence for church and commonwealth.

The last sentence in particular bears upon the direct problem of the conception of the purpose of education, and the whole quotation is a remarkable commentary upon what Calvinists have called the "Kingdom of God" concept. Broader than the "Church of Christ" concept, it includes not only the institutionalized church within its scope but all of man's relations with one another, social, economic, and political.[3] None of these areas is neutral, and all come under the sovereignty of God.

3. See H. H. Meeter's reference to this in *American Calvinism: A Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956, p. 6.

In education this means that commitment to the Christian idea of God and commitment to a Biblical anthropology demands a type of education not required by those not so committed. Since specific implications for the role of the school and society, the locus of control of education, and the role of religion in education will be detailed in later sections, it needs only to be pointed out here that some rather specific type of education is called for by the system of thought called Calvinism.

Roots in This Soil

There are at least four major roots, all growing in this soil of Calvinism, which have produced the present school system, and which have contributed to a greater or lesser degree to making it what it is today. It is important to note these, for there is no Calvinism pure and simple; there is only Calvinism as it has expressed itself in various cultures and disciplines. Therefore we must examine these rather than Calvinism in the abstract, for it is these that have given concrete and specific shape to the school system.

One important root is that which reaches back to The Netherlands of the nineteenth century. Without understanding something of the political, religious, and educational situation there, certain values and attitudes embodied in the present system become unintelligible. The second root of the school system reaches into the Christian Reformed Church, a denomination of some 200,000 members which celebrated its centennial in 1957. Here again, the connections and the relationships between the school and this denomination are intricate, and their lives are inextricably woven through each other. How the school system became non-parochial, and to what extent it remains this, is involved in the ecclesiology of the church, and no one can understand the school without understanding its ecclesiastical roots in the church. The third root of this system is in the Bible. While claiming to be non-parochial, it nevertheless desires to be rooted in the Scriptures of the Christian religion. Education rooted in the nature and destiny of man as expressed in Biblical concepts has always been of concern to supporters of this movement, and its desire for a close relationship between religion and education has been one of the main motivating factors behind its establishment. The fourth root of the school system is not as securely imbedded as some of the others. It has grown up in American culture and has been conditioned in part by American ideas. Although these roots are growing, their growth has in the past been uncertain and their direction unsure. How it can build further roots in American democracy while retaining its other roots is one of the major questions facing the school system today. How it makes the educational implications of Calvinism come to expression in American democracy, without either cultural separation and irrelevance on the one hand, or absorption and loss of distinctiveness on the other hand, will determine the future role of the Calvinistic school system in America.

This brief sketch of the four major roots of the school system is preliminary to a more detailed survey and critique of each of these in a separate section. The important point to note here is that each of these grew in, and thus was shaped by, the intellectual system of Calvinism. While racial, cultural, and ecclesiastical factors have modified that Calvinism, it has provided the central and unifying philosophy.

The School System and the Netherlands: Its Cultural Roots

Much of the uniqueness of the Calvinistic day school movement in America is the direct result of taking ideas about education which were formed in one culture, uprooting them from the place and forces which shaped them, and then transplanting them in America. This is a rough approximation of what a group of Dutch immigrants to America did in the middle of the last century. This displacement of ideas about education from one cultural context to another by an immigrant group largely unsophisticated in the ways in which cultures affect educational theory and practice led to some unfortunate consequences for both the group and for American education. It has sometimes resulted in representatives of this group firing off salvos at non-existent enemies, while allowing others to infiltrate unnoticed. It has also resulted sometimes in criticisms of the movement by those who misinterpreted its motives because they misread the minds of its supporters.

Since the movement in America has its roots in the educational and religious situation in The Netherlands, some analysis of this situation is therefore necessary. Calvinism played a more influential role in the culture of The Netherlands than it has in almost any other country. This profound impact upon Dutch religion and life has been recognized by a recent historian of Calvinism in the following words:

> Calvinism, by common consent, was a powerful formative influence in the national existence of the Netherlands and has continued to be a distinctive factor in the life of the Dutch nation.[4]

The influence of Calvinism was in fact so strong that the Reformed Church became the established religion and was connected to such political movements as the struggle for independence from Spain and the establishment of a centralized monarchy.

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4. John T. McNeil. *History and Character of Calvinism.* New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954, p. 255.

Although the Calvinists did not succeed politically in either of these attempts, the brand of Calvinism as represented in the Dutch Reformed Church nevertheless remained the dominant religion of The Netherlands for several centuries after the Reformation. Internal religious quarrels and a general decline of interest in doctrinal purity in the state church led to the Secession of 1834 called the *Afscheiding*. These dissenters withdrew from the estabished church because they felt that it was losing its faithfulness to the Calvinistic beliefs codified at the great Synod of Dort (1618-19). They also felt that the schools under the supervision of the state church were becoming neutral in matters of religion. This Secession was thus important for educational theory, for involved in it was not simply church polity and doctrine but a way of life that had found expression in an educational system. The educational objection was not so much to the principle of state control as such, but rather the objection was to the attempt by liberals to make the state school "neutral." (The objection to state control of education in principle came later as part of the outlook associated with the secession headed by Abraham Kuyper and referred to as the *Doleantie*.) It was this passionate concern for doctrinal purity intermingled with an opposition to state control of education that was carried over into America when these seceders emigrated as a group in 1847. Although this one movement does not tell the whole story of the influence of The Netherlands on the Calvinistic school movement in America, its impact was felt in later controversies within the school system in America.

Although far too lengthy to be shown here, there is definite evidence from original records and correspondence that one of the main causes of the emigration to America was indeed the dissatisfaction with the schools in The Netherlands. This centrality of education in the reasons for emigrating to America has been generally recognized. The editor of *The Banner*, the official organ of the Christian Reformed Church, which was later to nurse this school system through its infancy, summed up the situation this way:

> The inability of the persecuted seceders of the Netherlands to give their children Christian education was one of the principal reasons why they resolved to leave the land of their birth and make a home for themselves and their posterity in this new world. The hostile government of the Netherlands refused to let those sore pressed men and women educate their children as their conscience dictated (*Banner*, Mar. 28, 1947).

Thus the roots of the present Calvinistic school system extended to a group of people in The Netherlands in 1834 who risked both religious persecution and governmental opposition to defend what they held to be the pure Calvinism of Dort. However, the impact of The Netherlands on this movement does not end with this one group. Had there been no other influence the school would have developed quite differently, for this secession took place largely among the lower classes, and the members were fully as much affected by German pietism, which was sweeping Holland at the time, as by Genevan Calvinism. They were congenitally separatistic (which their later actions were to confirm) and anti-cultural, suspicious of all thought and belief except both the letter and spirit of Dort. Such a movement alone would not have provided the impetus necessary to establish a non-parochial school system. In fact the extreme concern for doctrinal purity and church traditions would definitely favor parochial education.

Calvinistic Revival of 1870

The other movement which must be taken into account was of considerable more power and had more intellectual leadership. It came to expression in the Calvinistic revival of 1870-80 under the leadership of Dr. Abraham Kuyper. The movement for the free Christian school, free from both state and church domination and therefore linked more closely to the family, gained momentum and found expression in The Netherlands not only in distinctive elementary and secondary schools but also in the establishment of the Free University of Amsterdam, owned by neither the state nor the church. This university, with Abraham Kuyper at its head, was the center of theological and educational thinking which had as a central concept the principle of "sphere sovereignty." According to this view each area of human endeavor and investigation, i.e., science, theology, art, business, education, has an inner structure and rationale of its own. It operates according to laws and has a structure created by God, but each is in its own sphere sovereign to itself. While there is inter-relationship between spheres, there is no one sphere which has sovereignty over all the others. According to this view, the science of education was such a separate sphere, and while related to theology and the church and government and the state, it was subject to control by neither. Since this view can easily be interpreted as a denial that theology is the queen of the sciences and that all other sciences bow in their conclusions to its findings, this principle of "sphere sovereignty" has not found wide acceptance among ecclesiastics.

Proponents of this view fanned out from the Free University and influenced education not only in The Netherlands but in America as well. Numbers of professional educators, ministers, and energetic laymen carried these Kuyperian-Calvinistic

ideas with them when they emigrated to America. Their presence here resulted not only in more interest and enthusiasm for education itself, but it led eventually to the administrative break between the Christian Reformed Church and the school system around the turn of the century. The schools became officially parental rather than parochial, and this was directly attributable to the educational ideas and ideals of this Calvinistic revival in The Netherlands.

A historian has noted and summarized Kuyper's influence on the school system in America thus:

> Kuyper's influence was powerful in the Reformed Church in America and especially in the Christian Reformed Church there. His beliefs gave to people who wanted for their children a Christian education based on Reformed principles a theoretical foundation. . . . The Dutch immigrant's schools (primary and high), especially his "Christian schools" as they are called in the Dutch communities, may be regarded as his most striking contribution to the field of education.[5]

A contemporary of Abraham Kuyper, and one who was also an effective spokesman for the Calvinistic conception of the school on the political scene in the Netherlands, was a man by the name of Groen Van Prinsterer. In the struggles with the liberals over whether or not The Netherlands should have a single system of state schools which were to be neutral as regards religion, he sided with Kuyper. He emphasized the importance of having the parent retain direct control of the school. He thus favored private schools which fused religion and education, and opposed laws designed to make support of the single state school compulsory.

Parenthetically it might be noted here that the multiple educational systems of The Netherlands of the present show the effect of this movement under Kuyper and Van Prinsterer. These people fought for the right of parents to have a school system reflecting their view of life. They opposed the principle of a state church and a single system of schools based upon it because of two main reasons. One was the principle of "sphere sovereignty" which held that the school should be free of both the church and the state. The other was that education could not be neutral and was inescapably religious. Their conclusion was that the school should be parentally controlled and openly oriented to religion. Since the time of Kuyper and Van Prinsterer their followers have even won for themselves and their schools the right to equal status and support with respect to tax funds. In a recent educational journal a government official in The Netherlands, in a context of a discussion of freedom, revealed the present policy on this matter:

> School policy in the Netherlands stems from the idea that parents are beyond others most responsible for the education of their children, and for that reason they must in principle have the opportunity to sending their children to the schools where education accords with their view of life without the necessity to pay more for it.[6]

Still speaking parenthetically, it is interesting to note that the Calvinistic school in America has never made a sustained and systematic endeavor to win such rights for itself. The Calvinistic school has never publicly framed the issue so as to avoid the church-state issue, and thus one of the greatest triumphs of the Calvinistic school in The Netherlands was never imitated in America. This failure is due in part to the changed cultural conditions under which the school functions in America, but it is also due in part to failure to work for the Kuyperian ideal of religious freedom.

In surveying the further effect which The Netherlands exerted on the Calvinistic school movement here in America, mention should be made of one more individual. Following Abraham Kuyper, who had directed his attention more to specifically political matters, came Herman Bavinck. This man wrote extensively and some of it was on specifically educational matters. Although more of a theologian than an educator by profession, he nevertheless gave evidence in his writings of being aware of trends in educational theory, and of the implications of a Christian view of man for theory and practice in education. Yet, although he helped the Calvinistic school in The Netherlands to attain stature, his direct influence on the school system in America has been less than it might have been had his works been translated into English for future generations. Only one major work interpreting his views, and a few references to him scattered in periodicals, remain to show precisely what his views were and what effect they had on the system in America.[7] Undoubtedly his chief influence lay in his impact upon those who emigrated around the turn of the century, and perhaps upon those of the first and second generation who could read him in the original. His main interest seems to have been in the pedagogical principles as they relate to classroom methodology. Since such educational psychology has less to do with shaping the main outlines of a movement than other factors, there is little in the present-day movement that could be directly traceable to his influence.

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5. Henry S. Lucas, *Netherlanders in America*. Ann Arbor: Univ. of Mich. Press, 1955, p. 602.

6. J. A. Verlinden, "Public and Private Education in the Netherlands," *Educational Forum*, Nov., 1957, p. 51.

7. See Cornelius Jaarsma's *The Educational Philosophy of Herman Bavinck*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1935.

His main contribution was to undergird educational practice with a Biblical anthropology, and this mainly in the early beginnings of the school system here in America.

In this section I have tried to show that one of the roots of the Calvinistic day school movement lay in The Netherlands, and that it has shaped the movement in significant ways in the past. A passionate concern for an intimate relationship between religion and education, and a conviction that neither the church nor the state rightfully control education: these are the two major ideas to come from The Netherlands. They came from the Secession of 1834 and the Calvinistic revival of 1870, but not in any clear and unequivocal sense. In many ways these two movements had opposing views on education and this can be seen most clearly in the shifting and ambiguous relationship which has existed for years between the Christian Reformed Church and the Calvinistic school system. Although the story of the forces at work to separate the two and the forces at work to bring them closer together will be told in the following section, it should be pointed out here that these differences are in the church because they were brought over from The Netherlands by those who stood in and represented different movements in The Netherlands itself. It now remains to examine that church and its views on education. The next article will be devoted to an examination of the school system and its ecclesiastical roots in the Christian Reformed Church.

On Confrontation

by Leonard Verduin

THE WORD "CONFRONTATION" is a favorite term in contemporary theological parlance. The term has its merits; for our faith is a faith that confronts men with Someone or with Something and then waits hopefully to see what happens. Salvation depends on confrontation; and on response to that with which we have been confronted.

Contemporary theology says that we must confront men with the living Christ and not with propositional truth. In the language of one of the spokesman of contemporary theology, "As to truth-content Christianity is of a piece with the rest of the world's religions; it is unique in that it confronts men with Person rather than with Proposition."

Reformed people had better be on their guard against this theology. For Reformed theology had long ago addressed itself to the question in hand and it has come up with a decidedly different answer. It had the wisdom to see that this is not a matter of either-or. It realized that confrontation with Oracle-in-the-form-of-Proposition and confrontation with Oracle-in-the-form-of-Person are the warp and the woof of a single fabric; just as you cannot have cloth unless you have both the warp and the woof so you cannot have the one without the other in this matter of confrontation. In the Reformed tradition we do not choose between being *Schriftgläubig* and being *Christgläubig*.

It would seem that men would know better, even on non-theological grounds, than to try to divorce knowledge of person from proposition. It is extremely doubtful that one can know person without proposition. Interplay of personalities is impossible without propositional utterance between them. Helen Keller lived the first dozen years of her life without communion with person — for the quite sufficient reason that she was unable to appropriate propositions emanating from the personalities around her. Two lovers will find it needful, as their personalities experience each other, to utter sentences. And they cannot become husband and wife without propositional statement. It is highly doubtful that men could know God unless they had communication from Him. To talk about the interplay of personalities in the absence of propositional utterances is to talk unrealistically.

In any case, believing is something we do over against Proposition and over against Person. To differentiate between these is quite all right; but to divorce the two is to commit theological mayhem. It is indeed significant that *two* Latin verbs were needed to set forth what it is to believe. They are *credo* and *fideo;* and one believes in the *credo* sense when he is confronted with Proposition and he believes in the *fideo* sense when he is confronted with Person. The English derivatives from these Latin root-words reflect the distinction we have just made; such words as *credible* and *credulous* make sense in the presence of utterances, whereas such words as *confidence* and *fidelity* are in place

when persons are involved. Any theology drawn from the Scriptures will know the distinction of *believing* and *believing-on;* but it will refuse to associate salvation with one of these to the exclusion of the other. In this matter, as so frequently in Christian theology, we can learn from the swallows, who never fly alone; there is always a second bird on the wing. And so every Christian truth has its complementary truth. Without its complementary truth every item in our faith becomes heretical. So it is with believing Proposition and believing Person.

What Say the Scriptures?

If it was the purpose of the writers of the Bible to teach that the one thing that matters is confrontation with Person, then they chose very ill-suited illustrative material. The faith of Abraham, who is called the father of believers and whose faith is referred to as classical, is an awfully unsatisfactory illustration of faith if indeed faith takes place over against Person and no more. For it is not to be gainsaid that Abraham's faith was something that evinced itself over against Proposition. Whatever one might want to say in a *total* delineation of Abraham's faith, the Object on which his faith is said to have laid hold was Proposition, the Proposition that he and Sarah were to have a son. The religious act which Abraham performed, the act for which he was counted righteous, was an act over against Assertion. If faith is indeed to be defined as something we do over against Person and not over against Proposition, then this choice of the faith of Abraham was an awfully poor choice on the part of the writers of the Bible.

Let us look at a second case on file, another example of saving faith. It is that of Peter in Caesarea Philippi. A divinely stated Proposition was still hanging on the air, the Assertion "This is my beloved Son." Peter was acquainted with rival statements as to the identity of the Christ; he makes his choice between them, elects to take over the Assertion that had come from the opened sky. And so he says, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And what did Jesus do? Did He say to Peter that this was all very well, but strictly preliminary? No, indeed; he called Peter blessed, for his response to Proposition.

One more example? Go to the desert road that went from Jerusalem to Gaza, and you will hear a man ask for baptism. You will also hear a Spirit-led evangelist say that in the case of such as this Ethiopian a confession of faith is prerequisite. The man therefore makes confession of his faith. He does so in the words, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And Philip baptizes him. This man's faith was also a something that came to expression over against Proposition; it was a matter in which *credo* was prominent.

The Bible does not hesitate to bind salvation to believing response to Proposition; for example, "If thou shalt believe with thy heart and confess with thy mouth that God raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved." We see that even when Person is present, so that conditions for confrontation with Person are ideal, Proposition is still used as the catalyst whereby belief is precipitated; witness the two disciples at Emmaus, who testified that it was when confronted with Proposition that a strange burning in their hearts had occurred. The Bible certainly does not countenance the modern fancy that confrontation with Proposition is at best preliminary; it teaches unmistakably that confrontation with Proposition is of the very essence of the medication which the Great Physician prescribes for sin-sick souls; and that response to Proposition is of the essence of that soul-act that brings salvation.

We are still caught up in medieval error if we hold that assent to Proposition comes natural to man and that it is not as such indicative of the presence of saving faith. Medieval theology sees behind every bush a thing it calls "mere historic faith." But in the modern scene it is most unlikely that assent to Proposition springs up in the absence of its concomitant of trust. That Jesus is *the* Savior and that Jesus is *my* Savior are not consecutive convictions in the soul of modern man: where the former is on hand the latter is present. This is because the Constantinian era is past and we are again at the point, and back to the climate, of primitive Christianity.

It is significant that the Church's confession is called a *creed,* a word that makes prominent not the *fideo* phase of faith but the *credo* phase of it. "Creeding" is done over against Proposition. And a creed is a sort of chant into which the Church swings as it assentingly recites the high spots of Proposition. In the golden age a creed was considered, and called, *"repetitio Sacrae Scripturae,"* an echoing of Holy Writ.

What Says the Creed?

It may be assumed therefore that the creeds, since they are cases of *repetitio Sacrae Scripturae,* will reflect the Biblical position as to the importance of confrontation with Proposition, and of response to it. Let us see whether this is also the case.

The Heidelberg Catechism has done an excellent job in trying to devise a definition of "saving faith" that will do justice to the two elements, the one associated with *credo* and the one associated with *fideo.* It has labored to get a formula in which

confrontation with Proposition and confrontation with Person would stand in that complementary relationship to each other which they have in Scripture. And it has succeeded magnificently. Its definition embraces both elements; and it mentions confrontation with Proposition first. Exactly as it should be. It says that saving faith is a "certain knowledge" and a "hearty confidence." Because it is our undertaking in this article to recover for confrontation with Proposition the place that rightly belongs to it, we may restrict ourselves just now to the former of the two ingredients of faith which the Catechism specifies.

Of the *credo*-function the Catechism says that it is "a mode of knowing by which I assent firmly to all that which God has disclosed to us in His Word." If one were minded to say that saving faith in its first delineation is a matter of saying yes to Proposition he could not choose words to say it more simply and effectively: "Faith is a mode of knowing that leads me to say yes resolutely to Proposition."

The Heidelberg formula, although not dictated by Calvin, certainly reflects the insights of Calvin. And it is hard to see how men can in our times say, in the jargon of neo-orthodoxy, that "the fact that Luther and Calvin found Christ and not a book the real center and subject of faith, long before criticism became powerful, shows that the rediscovery of the Gospel in our century by men who no longer can consider the Bible's inerrancy an axiom of faith is not a retreat from but the rediscovery of one of the deepest insights of the Reformation." Unless one can know Calvin apart from the utterances of Calvin (which neo-orthodoxy according to its formula should be able to do), the priority of confrontation with Person as set forth in the quotation just recited does not make sense. Calvin did *not* write off confrontation with Proposition and an absorbent response to a "book" as a matter not constitutive of saving faith. He did *not* relegate response to Proposition to the periphery. He did *not* play off "creeding" against "fideo-ing."

In a running battle with the Schoolmen of his day who held, as Calvin put it, "that faith is an assent with which any despiser of God may receive what is delivered to us in Scripture" (the reader will recall what we said earlier about the medievalness of the notion of "mere historic faith," the very thing Calvin is assailing here), Calvin wrote as follows: "There is one consideration which ought to put an end forthwith to the debate, namely, that assent itself . . . is more a matter of the heart than of the head, of the affections rather than of the intellect . . . . We conclude in one word that they talk absurdly who maintain that faith is formed by the addition of pious affection as an accessory to assent, since assent itself . . . consists of pious affection" (*Institutes*, III, 2:8). The notion that assenting (which can be done only over against Proposition) is *not* the issue, our neo-orthodox theologians have foisted upon John Calvin, not derived from him. Such passages as the following make this plain enough: "We must remember that there is an inseparable relation between faith and the Word, and that these can no more be dissociated from each other than the rays of light from the sun. . . . Wherefore, if faith declines in the least degree from the mark at which it ought to aim, then it no longer retains its nature. . . . Take away the Word and no faith will remain. . . . Faith is the knowledge of the divine will in regard to us, as ascertained from His Word" (*Institutes*, III 2:6). In passing it will be apparent to the reader whose insights they were that have given us the formula that faith is "a mode of knowing by which I assent. . . ."

What Say Reformed Churches?

It appears that Reformed Churches are not always saying what the Scriptures and the Creeds say. Among the instances that could be cited in support of this judgment, two come readily to hand. Consider, in the first place, that we have for several generations now taught people that the Apostles' Creed goes together of two elements, the first part (the items dealing with the three persons of the Trinity) being matters of believing on, and the part that begins with "I believe one holy, catholic, Christian Church" being a matter of believing-that. This also is a spurious distinction. The construction is constant throughout; and it simply is not true that we *fideo* over against Person in the first part and *credo* over against Proposition in the second part. The Apostles' Creed also is, from beginning to end, *repetitio Sacrae Scripturae* and offers an opportunity for the exercise of "a mode of knowing. . . ."

Also this. The very formula of the Heidelberg Catechism has had a heavy hand laid on it, so that its apologetic value in our rounds with neo-orthodoxy has been grievously diminished. Who can recover the Heidelberg insight as to the place which *credo* has in the soul-act that yields salvation from a perusal of the following emasculated Compendium version of it? "What is true faith? It is a certain knowledge of God, and of His promises revealed to us in the Gospel, and a hearty confidence that all my sins are forgiven me for Christ's sake. Do we not sometimes speak of a third element of faith besides knowledge and confidence? Yes, we speak of assent, following knowledge and preceding confidence. What does the assent of faith

mean? A hearty consent to be saved by Jesus and on His own terms." This is not a compendium of Heidelberg but a mutilation. The credo-act which men perform over against Proposition is so eclipsed in it that it has quite gone out of sight. This ancient Compendium delineation of saving faith will but poorly equip our young people in the battle against a theology that tries to tell them that only confrontation with Person and response to Him matters.

The Synod of 1957 was asked to approve a new formulation of the Compendium. The wording proposed read as follows: "What is true faith? True faith is a sure knowledge of God and His promises, and a firm confidence that all my sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. Where do we learn about God and His promises? We learn about God and His promises in the Bible which is God's inspired revelation of Himself." But this is no nearer approximation of the Heidelberg formula. The Bible is said in this revision to be the source book of our knowledge; but the Bible is not restored to its rightful position, the position given to it in the Heidelberg formulation, namely, that of being the *Object* of saving faith in its credo-aspect. Any Fundamentalist and any neo-orthodox person can, without much difficulty, take over the language of the Compendium — but no Fundamentalist or neo-orthodox person can make his peace with the Heidelberg formulation. That is why we should recover what we have lost, restore to the Compendium that which is so adroitly put in the Catechism of which the Compendium purports to be a compend. The answer to the question "What is true faith?" must begin by saying, "It is a way of knowing whereby I am led to give assent firmly to all that which God has disclosed to us in His Word." Nothing less than this will give us the foundation on which to build our counter-fort with which we think to ward off the arrows flying at us from those who say that confrontation with Person and response to Him is what really matters and that confrontation with Proposition and response to it is not a necessary ingredient in the recipe for saving faith.

P.S. We have written the words "Proposition," "Oracle," "Assertion," "Gospel," "Word," with a capital letter because of an intuition, the same intuition that has led men to write "Bible" that way, namely, that these words are designations of a Thing over against which we perform a religious act, that of believing.

John Calvin on Colossians 3:15

And the peace of God. He gives the name of the *peace of God* to that which God has established among us, as will appear from what follows. He would have it *reign* in our hearts. He employs, however, a very appropriate metaphor; for as among wrestlers, he who has vanquished all the others carries off the palm, so he would have the *peace of God* be superior to all carnal affections, which often hurry us on to contentions, disagreements, quarrels, secret grudges. He accordingly prohibits us from giving loose reigns to corrupt affections of this kind. As, however, it is difficult to restrain them, he points out also the remedy, that the *peace of God* may carry the victory, because it must be a bridle, by which carnal affections may be restrained. Hence he says, *in our hearts;* because we constantly feel there great conflicts, while the *flesh lusteth against the Spirit* (Gal. 5:17).

The clause, *to which ye are called,* intimates what manner of *peace* this is — that unity which Christ has consecrated among us under his own direction. For God has *reconciled us to himself* in Christ (II Cor. 5:18), with this view, that we may live in entire harmony among ourselves. He adds, *in one body,* meaning by this, that we cannot be in a state of agreement with God otherwise than by being united among ourselves as members of one body. When he bids us be *thankful,* I do not take this as referring so much to the remembrance of favours, as to sweetness of manners. Hence, with the view of removing ambiguity, I prefer to render it, "Be amiable." At the same time I acknowledge that, if gratitude takes possession of our minds, we shall without fail be inclined to cherish mutual affection among ourselves.

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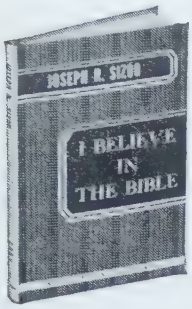

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BOOK REVIEW —

THE APOLOGETIC TASK

Christian Commitment, by Edward J. Carnell. New York: Macmillan, 1957. pp. xi, 314. $5.00

The Resurrection of Theism, by Stuart C. Hackett. Chicago: Moody Press, 1957. pp. 381. $5.00

Reviewed by CLIFTON J. ORLEBEKE, Instructor in Philosophy, Calvin College.

An *apologia* is a verbal defense, and Christian apologetics is the study of means by which the Christian faith may so be defended. In the early centuries after Christ, apologists found it necessary not only to vindicate the truth of their doctrines, but the moral purity and loyalty of their religious community. Since then, however, apology has conventionally been restricted to the task of showing "why Christianity is true" (Carnell).

Both of these books are new studies in Christian apologetics. Carnell, who is President of Fuller Seminary, subtitles his work *An Apologetic;* Hackett, who is Chairman of the philosophy department at Louisiana College, subtitles his book *Prolegomena to Christian Apology.* Among Carnell's earlier publications, two, in particular, have been devoted to the same general subject: his *Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (1948) and *A Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (1952). Presumably this is Hackett's first published book, though he does refer to an earlier article on apologetics which appeared in *The Word of God in the Life of Man*, a symposium issued in 1956 by Bethel College and Seminary of St. Paul, Minnesota.

In many ways these two books are strikingly different. Carnell advocates a new approach to apology, and does so largely by exhibiting this approach rather than by criticizing other apologists; Hackett, however, wishes to refurbish an old method now largely abandoned, and therefore feels the necessity of defending his method at length against dangerous innovations. Carnell's *probandum* is redemptive Christianity; Hackett's is theism, defined philosophically. Carnell's touch, though firm, is modulated by a semi-autobiographical style which relies heavily on illustrative anecdotes; Hackett, in contrast, travels a sternly dialectical road, leaving the remains of self-contradictory and meaningless objections by the wayside. Finally — leaving the differences by no means exhaustively stated — there seems to be an explicit and personal disagreement between the two men as to apologetic method. Whereas Carnell roundly rejects the method of demonstration from evidences which "are accessible to human self-sufficiency" — which is Hackett's procedure precisely — Hackett includes Carnell's earlier books in his destructive critique. Carnell's acknowledged intellectual forbears are Socrates, Pascal, and Kierkegaard; while Hackett's are Aquinas, Butler, James Orr, and F. R. Tennant.

Nevertheless, the divergences between the two men do not, by any means, exhaust the story. In their basic apologetic method they both reject what might be called the "orthodox" evangelical approach of recent years, which lays great stress on "presuppositions." Where Hackett criticizes Carnell's previous works on apologetics, he does so because of this tendency toward what he calls metaphysical presuppositionalism — a tendency which is played down, if not entirely eliminated, in Carnell's latest book. Carnell's final word on the subject, at least, avers that apologetics can show the claims of Christ to be continuous with truth, even though God saves men only by the foolishness of preaching (p. 302). On the other hand, Carnell's rejection of rational demonstrations does not follow from a conviction that such demonstrations are inherently impossible. Joseph Butler's *The Analogy of Religion*, e.g., he judges to be a "masterpiece" of its time, although now largely irrelevant to the contemporary mind. Apart from this obsolescence, the chief fault of arguments such as Butler's or Aquinas' is that they do not convict, even though they

may convince. "God is not rightly known until one is spiritually moved by a sense of his own moral distance from God" (p. ix). Therefore Carnell speaks carefully of a "spiritual approach to God" rather than a "rational proof of God's existence."

As I shall show below, these two books taken together constitute a complementary critique of "presuppositional" apologetics. In the sense that they agree with and supplement each other, they propose a method of apology which once more makes "common ground" the acknowledged basis of argument in defense of the faith.

* * *

In his Preface Carnell states that apologetics is an art and not a science, and hence there is no "official" way to go about defending the Christian faith. Stressing the fact that apology is usually response, and the fact that intellectual fashions change, he argues that much of the art in apology lies in addressing oneself precisely to his own age. Our own world, he says, moves in the climate of the existential and dynamic, influenced profoundly by Kierkegaard's talk of "individual," "confrontation," and "crisis." Carnell seeks, therefore, to reveal God in the existential fact of man's moral and spiritual environment, by developing a "third method of knowing" which acquaints man with this environment.

Two kinds of truth, says Carnell, are generally acknowledged and have constituted the locus of almost all traditional philosophizing. They are ontological truth, which is known by the method of direct acquaintance, and propositional truth, which is known by the method of rational inference. The condition of the first kind of knowledge is direct experience, and of the second, conceptual ordering of reality.

Both of these kinds of knowledge bring us into contact with genuine aspects of reality, which Carnell loosely terms the physical and rational environments. (Carnell defines knowledge as "man's systematic contact with the real"). Together, these two kinds of knowledge also constitute the necessary (but not sufficient) conditions for a third kind of knowledge. But by themselves they are not the ideal vehicles of apology, and that for two related reasons. First, knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by inference make no ultimate difference to the individual; they are only in the indicative mood, not the imperative. And, as we have seen, Carnell does not believe that arguments with a merely intellectual result, even if "successful," accomplish anything worthwhile. "After an exercise in Thomistic dialectic," says Carnell, "one can casually remark, 'How jolly glad I am that I happened on this, for now I can prove God's existence to my friends at the camera club!' "

Second, Carnell believes his own approach to strike men where they are united, rather than where they are divided. As overt believers, men can be skeptics, atheists, or dogmatists. But all men must *act*, and if they act as men, they must act morally. And if they face the existential implications of this acting, they must come to appreciate the existence of moral and spiritual realities common to them all. They do not always admit, explicitly, to these realities; but by their actions they nevertheless testify to them: "the real Pyrrho was the Pyrrho in act" (p. 44).

Now the third method of knowing takes advantage of this human community, and at the same time confronts man with morality (which is ultimately the presence of God) from the inside. The third kind of truth is personal rectitude; the third method of knowing is by moral self-acceptance; and the condition of this kind of knowing is the fact of moral responsibility.

It is plain that many *claim* not to know the objective moral-spiritual environment, and Carnell faces this difficulty. In answer, he insists that "man's difficulty is not lack of knowledge, but lack of moral courage to act on the knowledge he already has" (p. 27). A man *does* know because he *ought* to know. Carnell's analogy to the law of contradiction is instructive here. Aristotle demonstrated that the skeptic must use the law of contradiction to deny it; and since the skeptic does deny it, he reveals by his speech that in a sense he knows it. But Aristotle's proof does not necessarily bring a man to acknowledge the law of contradiction unless that man accepts his *moral* responsibility to acknowledge the implications of what he says. So with the moral-spiritual realities: every man acts on the presupposition that they exist, and in this sense he knows them; if he does not admit them, this is a fault of his will, not his intellect.

Thus Carnell's approach proffers to the skeptic not a finished demonstration in the conventional sense, but an approach to reality which incorporates at the outset a moral challenge to be honest. Come away, he says in effect, from your objective studies and specious quibblings. Examine yourself in your inwardness, and abide by the implications of what you are and do. Come to know yourself, and I will show that you also know God. (Carnell compares this sentiment, appropriately, with the opening sentences of Calvin's *Institutes*.)

For the details of what follows the act of moral self-acceptance, only a reading of the book will suffice. Carnell seeks to show that the third method of knowing proceeds through an analysis of the "judicial sentiment" to the necessity of God as the personal administrator of justice. The judicial sentiment Carnell finds revealed, interestingly, not first of all in the self-accusation of conscience or in the sense of duty, but in one's condemnation of others who do not respect the dignity of his person. An acute bit of phenomenological reporting accompanies his attempt to disentangle this judgment of condemnation from its alleged

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source, the immoral desire for personal vengeance. In fact, from his "discovery" that personal vengeance is culpable, he shows that only a superhuman justice can make the judicial sentiment intelligible. God, he says, judges others through and by us.

When man discovers that God constitutes his moral-spiritual environment, and that according to the demands of this environment his "moral essence" is a life of love, he discovers himself to be guilty before God. He can neither remedy his faults (the "moral predicament") nor merely apologize to God; therefore he must repent. The mystery of the gospel is that "God propitiated his own judicial sentiment by sending Christ to die in the stead of sinners."

Throughout his argument Carnell consistently uses the method of "inwardness." His exploration of the moral-spiritual environment, which occupies most of the book, relies heavily on the scrutiny of seemingly trivial moral phenomena with unusual perceptiveness. Carnell's preoccupation with homely incidents such as spilling another's packages in a crowded elevator, or the irritation caused by a noisy pencil-manipulator in the library, reminds one of nothing so much as Callicles' petulant complaint to Socrates: "You are always talking of cobblers and fullers and cooks and doctors, as if this had to do with our argument."

* * *

In his brief Foreword, President V. C. Grounds of the Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary characterizes Hackett's book as "an audacious challenge to what he [Hackett] deplores as a suicidal throwing wide open of the gates of Christian supernaturalism to the Trojan horse of illogicality." This is a fair description, and it is developed in Hackett's own prefatory remarks. Addressing himself primarily to his evangelical colleagues, he urges that "the Christian world view both needs and embodies a thoroughgoing, rational apologetic as a manifestatio of its relevance to the contemporar mind," and that "no existing system c Christian apology adequately meets thi need." No historical apologetic — nc even Kierkegaard's — has succeede in being totally irrationalist, argue Hackett, and the best of them hav been "fundamentally preoccupied wit a rational approach to apologetics."

Against the "irrationalism" an "voluntarism" of contemporary apolo getics, whether liberal, evangelical, o neo-orthodox, Hackett spares no re proach. He labels this surrendering of common rational ground "nothing short of suicide for the relevance o the Christian message" and "the crucifixion of intelligence," adding in a later passage that it is "entangled in . . a mass of self-contradictions."

These are strong words, even though Hackett assures us that they are directed at theories rather than at their authors. And Hackett undoubtedly considers it one of his main tasks to make a case against fellow-evangelicals in particular. As representatives of the movement he opposes, Hackett selects Carnell (in his two earlier books), C. Van Til, Carl F. H. Henry, and Gordon H. Clark.

In criticizing these men, Hackett distinguishes three senses of "presuppositionalism." One sort, which he calls categorical, is the method of showing that "a consistent application of the rational categories to the totality of available data must conclude the validity and truth of some ultimate metaphysical principle." The procedure is constructive, beginning with experience and showing that the existence of God is the presupposition (i.e., necessary condition) of that experience. Hackett endorses and uses this method himself. A second variety Hackett calls analytical presuppositionalism. This method tests world views by accepting them hypothetically and analyzing them logically for internal consistency and adequacy to experience. The Christian apologist will show, by this method, that postulating the existence of God provides the only adequate and consistent explanation of reality, while all other metaphysical systems fail on one or more counts. Hackett also approves of this mode of apology, stressing that it, like the first, rests on an epistemological rather than a metaphysical starting-point. Hackett does not deny that *in fact* the existence of

God is the *sine qua non* of rationality itself; but this, he contends, is not to be confused with the *knowledge* of that fact. Rationality does exist because God does exist; and because rationality does exist, it serves as the argumentative basis of apology.

A third kind of presuppositionalism, whose nature has already been suggested, Hackett rejects. This view holds that the existence of an ultimate being must be taken as an unproved and unprovable first principle. Only upon this assumption, it is alleged, does the intelligibility of the whole system become possible. Hackett's name for this theory is metaphysical presuppositionalism, or alternatively, "voluntaristic rationalism": it is voluntaristic because the choice of a first principle must be a willful act, not ultimately justifiable by evidence because all argument depends on the principle; and it is rationalistic because it holds that once the correct metaphysical ultimate in question has been chosen, the application of basic logical procedures (which also depend on the postulate) yields a more consistent picture of reality than could be achieved by choosing other postulates.

As he finds it in the method of his evangelical colleagues, Hackett accurately interprets this third kind of presuppositionalism to involve the choice of the Christian God, as revealed in Scripture, as starting-point for all argument. The Christian world-view is, of course, claimed to be rational, but because of sin this rationality is evident only to the person who is already a Christian. Apology can claim no truly common ground which can serve to show the truth of the Christian view.

After some ingenious sparring with the proposition that "no basic metaphysical assertion is capable of proof" — which, he claims, is either self-contradictory or nonsense — Hackett proceeds to his main contention that voluntaristic rationalists illicitly try to have their cake and eat it too. They both affirm and deny the necessity of their metaphysical presupposition for apologetic argument, and conversely, both deny and affirm the existence of some rational common ground. They say that God must be the starting-point of argument because there is no other point from which He can be reached; but at the same time they claim to show, on the basis of what must be common criteria, that only the Christian presupposition makes experience meaningful. This also holds if the unbeliever is asked to assume the Christian starting-point only imaginatively or hypothetically: "For the unbeliever's categories are, by the theory itself, immanentistic and distorted: even his concept of coherence is wrong; and if not, it constitutes a *real* common ground" (p. 170).

Again: metaphysical presuppositionalists reject every argument calculated to prove the existence of God, but seem to accept non-Christian *critiques* of such arguments (is Hume to be trusted, but not Aquinas?). To deny common rationality, says Hackett, is simply to deny apology. This is the dilemma he poses to Van Til (p. 170): either there is a true common basis for argument or not; if there is, fruitful argument is possible, but the denial of common ground is set aside; if there is no such true basis, argument is impossible. Period.

The logical outcome of metaphysical presuppositionalism, says Hackett, must be an extreme Calvinistic determinism which relieves man of his responsibility for seeing God in His revelation. Over against this, Hackett interprets St. Paul to say that man *ought* to see God in nature because he *can*, but at some point he wills to reject the evidence.

This evidence Hackett is not loath to supply. The bulk of his book, with the exception of the apologetic critique, consists of an intricate and highly technical posing of the traditional theistic proofs. Beginning with the epistemological question, he attempts to show that knowledge is possible only on the assumption of formal *a priori* categories innate to the mind. He accepts the substance of Kant's doctrine of the synthetic *a priori* and his manner of deducing the categories (though reducing the twelve to nine), and then — in a turnabout which would have horrified Kant — attempts to show that these categories apply to all experience, whether sensuous or non-sensuous.

After thoroughly defending this epistemology, and deducing from it the coherence theory of truth, Hackett passes to a consideration of the proofs for theism, which he defines as "that metaphysical philosophy which explains the total space-time universe by positing as its ground an absolutely necessary being, whose nature is that of personal intelligence and absolute goodness, and who, though he sustains the existence and functioning of that universe, nevertheless transcends it in the timeless necessity of his being" (p. 179). He classifies the arguments conventionally as either *a priori* or *a posteriori*, and on the basis of rational empiricism rejects the Anselmian and Cartesian ontological proofs because they are purely formal. The *a posteriori* "cosmological" and "teleological" proofs, however, he holds to be valid, with the former proving the existence of a necessary being, and the latter amplifying the nature of this being. Finally, in what is surely a modern *tour de force* in the field, Hackett spends over a hundred pages painstakingly stating and rebutting some thirty arguments *against* the theistic proofs, including practically every

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Clearly this prodigious effort cannot be evaluated in detail here. Suffice it to say that past critics of the proofs (including Hackett's evangelical colleagues, whose strictures he rebuts in a separate section) now have something new and substantial to chew upon. In general, it might be observed that Hackett consistently hews to his epistemology in argument. That knowledge is possible he asserts again and again, since this is the condition of all agreement or disagreement. But knowledge has its logic, and the objectors ultimately violate the canons of this logic by self-contradictory or meaningless assertions. And so, as Hackett puts it in one of his colorful metaphors, the non-theistic positions one by one "go up in the smoke that springs from the fire of rational analysis."

* * *

Hackett's elaborate criticism and violent denunciation of "metaphysical presuppositionalism" are clearly founded on one central point, namely, that it makes apology impossible. *If* it be true that one can appreciate the truth of Christianity only by becoming a Christian; *if* it be true that unregenerate man shares nothing, epistemologically, with the Christian; then it follows inevitably that the apologist cannot even discuss, let alone prove, the truth of his position. But this surely proves too much, since it implies that even the preacher can never communicate with the unsaved in his audience. Granted that communication is an art, to be labored at and perfected, no one is likely to assert that it is impossible in principle. Thus we must allow at least this much "common ground": that terms and syntax can be the basis of genuine communication between believer and unbeliever.

One concession, then, must be made to Hackett. And it is important to him, since he is eager to show that three are "forms of thought or intelligibility common to all systems." Such commonness he regards as almost equivalent to "a common epistemological starting-point in terms of which a metaphysical ultimate is established."

Metaphysical presuppositionalism would, however, deny the inference. To allow the possibility of discussion, they say, is not to allow the possibility of "establishing" something. But they do admit something else, in practice if not in theory. They admit that the apologist can *argue* about philosophical systems on the basis of (common) criteria such as coherence, consistency, ability to explain predication or to give meaning to life, scope of explanation, and the like. In so far as they are not merely talking to each other, they must assume that the apologist can use one or another of these criteria in the marketplace. And this makes these criteria common epistemological ground of some importance, giving further credence to Hackett's critique. In fact, to use Hackett's distinction, it places them in the camp of analytical rather than metaphysical presuppositionalism. At the same time, it should be noted, this concession eliminates Hackett's main objection that apologetic argument is rendered impossible.

But still, the presuppositionalists would reply, their position is by no means identical to Hackett's. For Hackett claims that he can prove, demonstrate, the truth of theism on the basis of common epistemological ground, and that is impossible. Clark writes: "No demonstration of God is possible; our belief is a voluntary choice; but . . . none the less it is possible to have sane reasons of some sort to justify the choice" (*A Christian Philosophy of Education*, pp. 48, 49). And Carnell: "This is not a formal demonstration of God's existence: it is simply proof by coherence" (*Introduction*, p. 170; Carnell's distinction seems to be identical to that of Hackett between categorical and analytical procedure). Van Til's position is slightly different; he repudiates the traditional proofs as given, but also holds that the theis proof, when properly stated, is obj tively valid (see *The Defense of Faith*, p. 256).

The actual validity of the tradition proofs, then, seems to be the real poi at issue between Hackett and his adv saries. And here the adversaries a caught in a pretty trilemma. If t arguments are actually invalid, one three possibilities follows: either G has not provided sufficient witness Himself in creation, or the unbeliev cannot read this witness aright, or t unbeliever can read this witness arig but chooses not to. The first altern tive contradicts the teaching of Chri tianity. The second alternative, if a cepted by the Christian, places him the dubious position of accepting face value the logic of unenlightene witnesses. The third alternative co tradicts the hypothesis, admits the v lidity of the proofs, and lands o squarely in Hackett's — and Carnell — camp.

The point is this. Strict metaphys cal presuppositionalism is at least co sistent if it holds that unregenerate rea son, being blinded and distorted b sin, cannot see that God's revelatio of Himself in creation is objectivel sufficient and perspicuous, while en lightened Christian reason *does* recog nize this sufficiency. But this positio commits one to saying that some the istic proof is really valid, even thoug others may not admit it to be so. Va Til is consistent here, though unfortu nately he does not formulate the proo held to be valid. Thomists say the same thing for proofs they *do* state But when presuppositionalists tell us that the proofs are really invalid, they suggest that even for the Christian the evidences of God are insufficient. They are willing to go so far with Hume, Kant, *et. al.*, that they accept *their* criterion for what is valid and invalid. At bottom, I suggest, the real motivation behind the presuppositionalist critique of theistic proofs does not rest on personal conviction that they are invalid, but on a desire to account in advance for the failure of these proofs to convince many people. Instead of impugning the people, they impugn the proofs.

The extent of their inconsistency is shown by the great confidence which some presuppositionalists do place in their own type of argument, which follows closely Hackett's analytic presup-

positionalism. We have noted already that Carnell uses the word *proof* by coherence, though eschewing the word demonstration. Clark says that reasons may be given to justify one's choice of an ultimate, though not strict proof. Why not proof? Principally because "life is short," and therefore one will not likely be able to show the absurd conclusions of all false positions. Even so, he asserts at the conclusion of *A Christian View of Men and Things* that "there is no other type of philosophy [than Christianity] that has a unifying principle to offer" (p. 325).

These are certainly not repudiations of theistic proof *in principle*. It still might be possible, as Hackett argues, that there is only a finite number of erroneous philosophies, and that all of these can be shown to be fatally self-contradictory or otherwise inadequate. This is a technical question, and it has to be argued within Hackett's bailiwick, not the presuppositionalist's. For the latter, in admitting the relative adequacy of apologetic argument, has already abandoned his premise that there is no common ground.

I have suggested above that the presuppositionalist thesis is grounded in certain convictions about the historical failure of the theistic proofs, rather than by a consideration of their intrinsic validity. It is true, of course, that as the modern secular mind has come to its fruition the old arguments have been largely discredited. In the present climate of post-Christian heresies, it is understandable that Christian apologists look almost in vain for something in common with their secular colleagues. Seeming to lack such a basis, they naturally turn to a theory of apology which denies in principle the existence of common ground.

But this is a mistake, and the instinct of most philosophers to argue has served them better than their theory. The *sort* of arguments they use, however, has changed. Many now rely heavily on formal considerations, employing in particular the *reductio* technique on opposing philosophical systems. Others, taking advantage of the prestige enjoyed by natural science, attempt to turn the analysis of science itself or some particular scientific theory to their own ends. Still others, though, regrettably, neither of the present authors, are attempting to salvage something useful from the current vogue of "ordinary language" philosophy. Against the background of these contemporary apologetic techniques, Hackett's ambitious endeavor to rehabilitate the old proofs is something of an anachronism. But this *historical* judgment is not to be confused with a condemnation of the *principles* he employs.

It would seem, then, that Carnell is right when he says that there is no official way to go about defending the faith. And we owe to him, too, a pregnant suggestion of the kind of apology which might well speak to a large segment of the contemporary mind. As I interpret him, Carnell follows the lead of existentialism to an area of common ground which lies exceedingly deep. This is, in Chesterton's words, a man's "dumb sense of reality." However overlaid a man's mind may be by current fashions of thought, he does not carry on in total isolation from reality unless he is wholly demented. But this is only another way of saying that he is not completely isolated from God.

In so far as a man lives a human life, he *will* make claims on others, both intellectually and morally; he *will* take account of nature's uniformities, when he knows them; he *will* worship something or someone. He may not know the implications of these acts; if he is shown, he may fiercely deny them; but as a matter of fact, he is morally obliged both to know them and to admit them. And since, in actuality, the Christian God is the presupposition of human existence and behavior, every man is morally obliged to know and worship the true God. On this level of argument, as Carnell shows, the apologist has the twofold task of exhibiting the implication and conveying the moral challenge; this, as I see it, is the gist of Carnell's definition of knowledge as moral self-acceptance, and of truth as personal rectitude.

Extreme presuppositionalism holds that Christian and non-Christian cannot agree on anything. This makes argument impossible. Apologetic practice, whether of Hackett or of those who profess presuppositionalism, generally admits and uses some area of common *theoretical* agreement. This is the only possible basis of philosophical apology, and its adequacy for demonstration is a philosophical question. Existential apology, as exhibited by Carnell, attempts to get beneath the level of possible theoretic disagreement to the natural man's inconsistent awareness of the truth.

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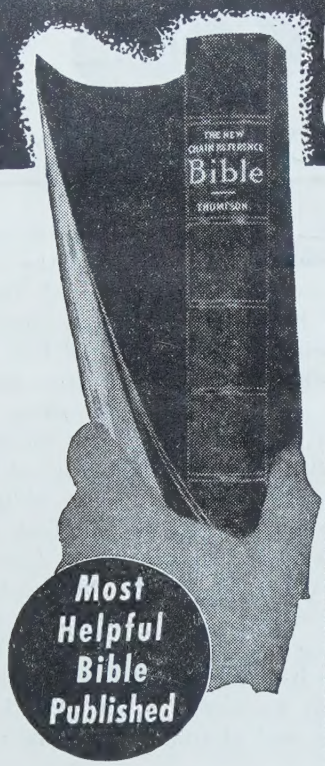

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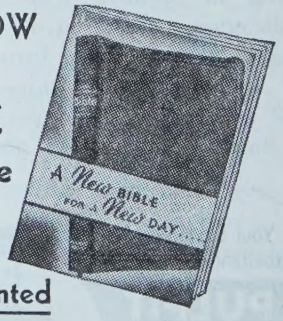

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